



MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF WHITCHURCH-ON-THAMES PARISH COUNCIL
Virtually at 20:00 Thursday 14th January 2021

Members Present

Chairman	Jim Donahue
Members	Hanna Ferguson Katherine Higley Carrie Leadbeater-Hart Diana Smith Jon Steward

Officers Present:

Clerk	Jane M. Yamamoto
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Public and Press: David Bowen, Cllr Peter Dragonetti, Mark Lovett, Laura Lucas, Richard Wingfield

The meeting started at 20:00.

1 **Apologies for absence & Mission Statement** 20:00

2 **Declaration of Interests** by Councillors on any items on the Agenda

3 Public Forum - an opportunity for members of the public to express their point of view on any item on the agenda.

3.1 Laura Lucas requested that the Parish Council either follow the Covid Guidelines they were given to close all sports facilities, which included equipment, on the Village Green, or that they release a statement saying that they have decided not to follow this particular guideline.

The Chairman responded that advice was sought from the OALC, which said that the government guidance was not clear and that the Parish Council was found to be fully compliant. Both the cricket field and football pitch were closed as stated in the Parish Council statement. Cllr Smith added that to take down the remaining one football post, adults would have to break social distancing rules to do so.

Resolution: The Council voted to not change any of the actions they had agreed at the previous meeting on 7th January, but to issue a revised statement proposed by Cllr Ferguson that removes the Council's summary of the government guidance and provided links to the relevant government guidelines directly. The revised statement is provided in Attachment 1.

4 Chairman's update 20:20

Completion of pavement resurfacing

OCC team and they confirmed that OCC contractors will be back to provide a new surface "Slurry Seal" over pavement surfaces of Manor Road, High Street and Swanston Field. This will

be a thin surface layer to make these pavements appear fully resurfaced. The work they did in November and December was patching pre-work prior to the slurry seal layer. This work is approved but can only be completed when the temperature is consistently over 10 degrees.

I understand that the February High Street Road closure from the 22nd February is to perform similar road patching work prior to a “carriageway dressing” planned for next fiscal year. I am trying to find out more details on this including impact to road markings if a complete resurfacing is planned.

Drainage work continues

Residents will be aware that OCC is repairing a stretch of drainage on the upper High Street by the Art Gallery. This is a continuation of the High Street the maintenance work that has been done since the flash flood of June last year, in which OCC has cleared blockages in the drains near The Greyhound. The storm drain near the Picture Gallery was allowing water to leak into the cellar, is old and built of brick. It will be changed to a pipe that can be maintained by pressure-jetting.

I have been told by OCC that a full clearing of all High Street drains will be completed once both the storm drain work and the slurry seal work is completed as debris from the slurry seal often falls into the drains so it is best to do this once to also clear our slurry seal debris.

20 mph Speed Limit

OCC approved a motion to make 20 mph the standard speed limit in built up areas, raised by Pete Sudbury of Wallingford was unanimously approved. This is clearly something we have wanted for the High Street, Hardwick Road and Eastfield Lane for quite some time and this decision should now make this achievable. I have raised our desire to OCC to have a 20 mph speed limit in key areas of the village, highlighting that this was a key element of our 2019 Village Plan recommendations.

Coombe Parke Fence

The Coombe Park Fence replacement is now completed along Hartslock Bridleway. They are in the process of adding a fence along Manor Road, including behind the Village Hall. I have reminded them of the feedback that we previously provided asking for space behind the Village hall for purposes of maintenance and not blocking light in the windows. They have asked their builder to look into this.

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| 5 | To approve minutes of the meeting of 10th December 2020. | 20:25 |
| | Resolution: The Council voted to approve the minutes for December 10, 2020. | |
| 6 | To receive reports from the representatives of Oxfordshire County Council and South Oxfordshire District Council. | |
| 6.1 | SODC District Councillor Report (Attachment 2) | 20:30 |
| 7 | Finance: | 20:35 |
| 7.1 | Resolution: The following payments were approved for January: | |

Payment	Amount
Clerk salary (January 2021)	BACS
Zoom (January)	£14.29 DD
APT (Action for Pangbourne Toilets Grant) (attachment 2)	£750
External Audit	£360
Alistair Aitchison (50ft ball stop net)	£397.94
Kingdom Signs	£650.38
Rialtas Annual subscription	£148.80
Nick Plumridge (re-location of two bins to VG)	£225
OALC (2 courses – Cllrs CL-H/HF)	£180

- 8 Internal and External audit (attachment 3)
Notice of conclusion of Audit (attachment 4).
Resolution: The Council voted to engage a new internal auditor for last year and this year and to not to charge for copies of the report of the Annual Report.
- 9 Resident quotations for tree work (see three quotations by email) attachment 5 20:50
a)£825.60*
b)£250
c)£450*
*inclusive of VAT
Resolution: It was voted to approve the quotation from Heritage Trees for £450. The work will not be performed until at least April as this was budgeted for next year. Cllr Higley would liaise with the supplier.
- 10 Update on the Manor Road Tree Maintenance Plan – Cllr Higley
SODC have formally approved the report from Heritage Trees. The work must be completed within 2 years. Cllr Higley to contact Heritage Trees to schedule the work and to ask for a reduction as we are also using them for the Village Green.
- 11 Pedestrian Safety Initiatives – Cllr Donahue 21:00

Cllr Donahue presented a number of options for improving pedestrian safety that he and Cllr Smith discussed with OCC to address the pedestrian safety issues that we recently prioritised:
- Pavements in front of the Ferry Boat Inn
 - Pedestrian crossing the High Street at Eastfield Lane
- The full presentation is provided in Attachment 6.
- Resolution:** The Council agreed that we should confirm with OCC that we would like them to proceed with the following two trials related to safety at the pavement in front of the Ferryboat:
- Trial 1: Giving priority from south to north to test priority give way approach. The goal would be to see if it reduces the number of times that two cars try to enter the single lane narrows at the same time as this is when pedestrians are most at risk.
 - Trial 2: Setting up traffic cones along the side of the pavement to test the effect of barriers such as bollards. The goal would be to see if this reduces the number of times

cars drive on the pavement as one vehicle would likely need to back up to make way for the other one if there were barriers.

- This would likely happen in the spring when more OCC budget was available

Action – 170: Cllrs Donahue, Smith, and Leadbeater-Hart to liaise with the owner of the Ferryboat to get their feedback on plans for the two trials to address safety at the pavement in front of the Ferryboat.

The Council also agreed that we should investigate the options to address safety for pedestrians crossing the High Street near Eastfield Lane, in particular for parents and children going to and from school. This will include liaising with OCC and the owners of the Greyhound to determine which options are viable. Once options are clarified, they will need to get feedback from the public on which options they find acceptable. Public feedback could be sought via the web-site, Facebook, Bulletin, or leaflet drops.

Action – 171: -Cllrs Donahue, Smith, and Leadbeater-Hart to come up with action plan to investigate this further and look at options to address pedestrian safety crossing the High Street at Eastfield Lane.

- 12 TAPAG – update and next steps – Cllr Donahue
Changes to Standing Orders and Terms of Reference for Working Groups and Committees would be raised as motions at the next meeting. An action was agreed at the 7th January extraordinary meeting for Cllrs Smith and Leadbeater-Hart to develop a plan to recruit new members of TAPAG to replace those that had recently resigned.
- 13 Climate Change Emergency – Cllr Steward 21:30
Cllr Steward shared some ideas about tackling pollution within our village. He recommended planting trees and wild flower meadows in areas in the village that helped to reduce pollution. He was also reviewing air pollution monitors for the High Street. He will investigate these options and include the Green Team.
- 14 Trees for the Village – Cllr Steward (covered in 13)
- 15 OCC Deep cleanse of Village (attachment 7)
The attached table would be sent to OCC to complete during February.
- 16 To review progress on any open actions from previous Parish Council meetings and agree any revision of actions on the action list. 22:25
Action – 172 - Barbed wire iron post beside muddy lane halfway up between school and allotment on left hand side to get rid of it. Cllr Leadbeater-Hart to remove it.
- 17 To confirm the date and time of the next Meeting on 11th February 2021 at 20:00.
- 18 Confidential discussion for thank you notes from the Parish Council
No new thanks you notes identified. Councillors should send emails ahead of the meeting with candidates in the future.
Cllr Steward raised concerns about how to handle negative feedback from residents and support he requires from his wife to help him with Parish Council responsibilities.
- 19 Meeting Close 22:30

Parish Council Statement on Lock down

The Parish Council discussed the most recent government regulations and guidance in relation to the current national lockdown and its implications for the Village Green and other Open Spaces in the village at the Parish Council meetings on the 7th and the 14th January 2021.

All of the relevant UK government lockdown guidance is available at these links for anyone wanting more detail:

- Government Lockdown Guidance: <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/national-lockdown-stay-at-home>
- Coronavirus (COVID-19): advice on accessing green spaces safely <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/coronavirus-covid-19-advice-on-accessing-green-spaces-safely>
- Oxfordshire Playing Fields Association guidance. <http://www.opfa.org.uk/news.html>
- Guidance for managing playgrounds and outdoor gyms: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/covid-19-guidance-for-managing-playgrounds-and-outdoor-gyms/covid-19-guidance-for-managing-playgrounds-and-outdoor-gyms>
- Guidance for use of community facilities: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/covid-19-guidance-for-the-safe-use-of-multi-purpose-community-facilities/covid-19-guidance-for-the-safe-use-of-multi-purpose-community-facilities>

The Parish Council agreed:

- To keep the Village Green open for exercising but close the football and cricket pitches, in a manner similar to the previous lockdown period. A sign to this effect was put on the village green entry after the PC meeting. It also reminds users to practice social distancing.
- The Manor Road playground will remain open, but we encourage parents to follow social distancing guidance including use of the hand sanitizer that is provided. Should you notice the hand sanitiser running out, please notify Cllr Ferguson (cllrferguson.whitchurchonthames@gmail.com). We will continue regular cleaning of these facilities.

Please also note that if residents become aware of incidents where social distancing is not being observed, they have the option of contacting the police at 101. While the Parish Council is responsible for maintaining the Open Space and related facilities, we cannot enforce individual behaviour or their compliance with the law, although you may have noticed the new signs at either entrance to the Village Green encouraging respectful behaviour.

Finally, we have now relocated the rubbish and dog bins from the front of the school entrance where they were not heavily used, to the Village Green Entrance by the car park. This is something we have been planning for a while and hope it will help to address the recent littering problem.

Kind Regards,

Jim Donahue
Chairman, Whitchurch-on-Thames Parish Council

Attachment 2 – Cllr Dragonetti report

Report to Whitchurch on Thames Parish Council January 2021

Local Plan 2035

The new Local Plan was adopted by the Council at the meeting in December so that is the end, I think, of that particular chapter. Although there are no significant direct implications for Whitchurch, the significant housing developments in around Benson and Wallingford and other places will perhaps inevitably increase traffic through the village, as well as in many other places.

My recommendations for the power lines on the Green belt sites around Oxford to be put underground before development takes place was ignored by the Inspector, but I am now pushing for this to be done in the site master plans. Although expensive, it should be one of the things that a planning system does, plan for the future. It seems to me that there is really is no planning system at all, and what is called planning is no more than a reaction to the proposals by landowners and others.

Planning

I have just learnt that an application for a development in Wallingford, adjacent to the Corn Exchange, has been refused on Appeal. This development had been recommended for approval by planning officers, and came to the planning committee who turned it down. It was a horrible development in the conservation area that would have resulted in more erosion of the historic and attractive character of Wallingford. It was similar situation with another development in Henley that the Planning Committee also refused against officers recommendation, and which was then refused on appeal. I will always be on the side of good design and a positive view of conservation in our towns and villages.

Covid

The resurgence of the virus has meant that many of the officers of SODC have been redeployed to other roles, as the Council is distributing grants to wet- led pubs, other business support grants, giving grants to people under the Winter Support Grant Scheme to help residents affected by the pandemic buy food and keep their homes warm this winter, and supporting advice centres such as Citizens Advice.

Biffa have been affected by staff sickness, so the garden waste service is currently suspended so that the main waste service can continue.

I am holding funding to support local community groups or activities that are helping residents who are affected by Covid. Please let me know if there are any such needs that I can help with.

Peter Dragonetti

Attachment 6

Pedestrian safety initiatives – Cllr Donahue

Cllrs Smith and Donahue met with Lee Turner and Jon Beale of OCC Highways in a Teams meeting to discuss options to address the pedestrian safety issues that we recently prioritised:

- Pavements in front of the Ferry Boat Inn
- Pedestrian crossing the High Street at Eastfield Lane

Pavement at Ferryboat:

We reminded them that OCC had given a number of reasons that they didn't consider it feasible to raise the current pavement – lack of highway width, complications with drainage, access to the pub land, and tripping hazards.



Options we discussed included:

- Use of bollards – this is possible but there must be sufficient clearances. Jon Beale would need to visit the site to measure:
 - o The carriageway requirement is 3m, especially if lorries sometimes go through there
 - o The pavement/footway must be 1.2m due to disability regulations
 - o Bollards must be 450mm away from the road width
 - o While there is space in front of the Ferry Boat to extend the existing walkway, this could not be used by OCC for the pavement unless Punch Taverns changed the deeds to give extra land to OCC, which they felt was unlikely.

- Dan Depp/OCC had suggested the possible use of a raised kerb to protect bollards (not a raised pavement). This had the advantage of protecting bollards from damage, but there is still the width issues to address.
- Use of cylinders (also called dollies) at edge of pavement, where cars can ride over them if necessary, but is still subject to the same width restrictions as bollards
- Rumble strips/ vibra lines were an option, but tended to be noisy and not recommended for residential areas.
- We also discussed options to reduce the likelihood for two cars passing the narrows at the same time as this is when pedestrians are most at risk from a vehicle going onto the pavement:
 - o Lee said stop signs were not appropriate and they do provide clear priority for the traffic
 - o He said that he was not aware that there was no priority in the Give Way signs for the lower narrows. He would recommend trying a priority flow to help stop the confusion on who has right of way in the narrows.
 - o After looking at the site on Google maps, it was generally agreed that those coming from south to north (from the toll bridge) generally had a clear view to see if traffic was clear before entering, while those coming from north to south (from Eastfield Lane) did not have as clear a view and should be encouraged to stop to look carefully before entering the lower narrows.





- Lee recommended two week-long trials to see if they reduced the amount of infringement on the pavement:
 - o Trial 1: Giving priority from south to north to test priority give way approach. The goal would be to see if it reduces the number of times that two cars try to enter the single lane narrows at the same time as this is when pedestrians are most at risk.
 - o Trial 2: Setting up traffic cones along the side of the pavement to test the effect of barriers such as bollards. The goal would be to see if this reduces the number of times cars drive on the pavement as one vehicle would likely need to back up to make way for the other one if there were barriers.
 - o This would happen in the Spring when more budget was available
 - o We discussed with the Parish Council at the January meeting.

Based on people's feedback tonight, Cllr Donahue will confirm to OCC that we would like them to plan for the two trial's in the Spring. Cllrs Donahue, Smith, and Leadbeater-Hart will discuss this with Graham of the Ferryboat inn to get his feedback on it.

Pedestrian Safety for Eastfield Lane Crossing

People crossing the High Street for access to the school tended to be people coming from homes in the village coming from north to south. Based on this assumption, Lee recommended we focus on a crossing across from the Greyhound as opposed to Prospect House, as it was closer for people and it avoided the need to cross traffic on Eastfield lane in addition to the High Street.

Jon Beale highlighted that there was already a lowered pavement across from the Greyhound which could be used. It was currently within a white restricted parking zone, but a parking space would need to be removed to accommodate a crossing zone.





- A key issue is whether there is public land available at the Greyhound to put a virtual pavement marked out by white lines.
 - o Diana said the land registry indicates that there should be sufficient public land available by the road in front of the Greyhound for a virtual pavement.
 - o Jon said his initial look indicated the same, but he would need to confirm this by consulting OCC's dedicated Highway Records Team.
- Options to secure the crossing across the road included:
 - o Uncontrolled crossing point (lowered kerb to indicate a crossing point on the pavement but no road markings)
 - o Zebra crossing – typically costs £20,000. This is only recommended where there is continued crossing throughout the day, and it seems that the crossing here happened primarily at the two school drop off and pick-up times. This is probably not appropriate for our situation.
 - o Diana and Jim agreed an action to try to gauge the quantity and times of day that people need to cross on a daily basis.
 - o Flashing lights on school crossing signs to go on at certain times of the day (wig-wag lights). This could include an advisory 20mph when lights are flashing. OCC is working on one of these on the Vale. They are generally solar powered. With a cost of £4,800. Councillor priority funds and CIL funds are generally available for this in addition to OCC budget.
- He also discussed road markings or raised flat-top road humps such as the one on the toll bridge. Lee was generally not a fan of these as pedestrians may believe that they have right of way and be bold in crossing the road there.
- He showed us a brick crossing with two bollards on either side on Gloucester Street in Farringdon, that was attractive and could be an option for us.





Attachment 7

Vale of White Horse District Council – Deep Cleanse Service

<u>AREA</u>	<u>LITTER PICK</u>	<u>SWEEP</u>	<u>WEEDS</u>	<u>MOSS</u>	<u>PHOTO</u> (If applicable)	<u>PRIORITY?</u>
Cut between Eastfield Lane and Swanston Fields			Weeds should be removed the length of the pavement as they may cause damage to the surface if not removed.			Medium
Manor Road		Sweeping and removal of leaves on pavements and road from High Street to Village Hall and then onwards to the edge of Coombe Park.				Medium
Manor Road				Moss under playground equipment on safety mats.		High (slippery hazard)
High Street between the Ferry Boat pub and the Bridge		Leaves and tree debris on pavement and road				High (tripping hazard)